



The Army School of Music

THE EARLY YEARS

The U.S. Army School of Music can trace its roots back to the early years of the 19th century. The first record of an organized music school was when eleven men from COL Macomb's 3d Artillery Band were either transferred or went directly to the 6th Infantry Band School on Governor's Island. They were trained to play flutes, oboes, bassoons, clarinets, French horns, serpents, bass drums, and tambourines. There are also indications that a small number of men were sent from West Point to the school to learn new percussion instrument techniques which differed markedly from the rudimental drumming used for drills and parades. The first Teacher of Music for the Military Band was musician Daniel Loomis. He was one of the original eleven men transferred from the 6th Infantry Band School to West Point. Post Orders indicate his appointment occurred on 26 May 1816.

THE SCHOOL OF PRACTICE

During and prior to the Civil War, musical training occurred at the "School of Practice for U.S.A. Field Musicians" at Governor's Island, New York. The earliest reference about the school is found in a book "Ten Years in the Ranks, U.S. Army" written by a young Soldier age 12, Augustus Meyers. He wrote about his experiences at the school. The living quarters were sparse, consisting of double bunk beds with insufficient space for comfort or convenience. The beds were large sacks stuffed with straw. The meals consisted of boiled salt pork and beef, rice soup, bread, potatoes, bean soup, and coffee. The daily duties began reveille with the fife and drums performing at the official entrance to Governor's Island. At 0800, the guard mount ceremony commenced followed by a period on uniform and equipment maintenance. School started at 0900 until 1100 followed by musical training from 1100 to 1200 and 1400 to 1600. The young drummers and fifers performed at retreat. This schedule occurred every day except Saturday when all instruction ended at 1200. In addition to board, lodging and musical training, the boys received \$7.00 a month.

The School of Practice studied from "The Drummers and Fife Guide" by George G. Bruce. A board of musicians assembled by the War Department adopted this book as the official text for the school. This manual was used until the end of the Civil War. Seven years later in 1869, a board of appointed officers investigated the system of training field musicians. The board approved a method book called "Strube's

Drum and Fife Instructor" by Gardiner A. Strube.

Army regulations of 1863 allowed the superintendent of recruiting depots to enlist, as field musicians, boys of twelve years of age and upward who had a natural talent for music. After enlisting, field musicians of the Regular Army could be sent to the School of Practice on Governor's Island, New York. They were billeted opposite from Brooklyn, at the Old South Battery.

PARTNERING WITH CIVILIAN INSTITUTIONS

Seeking ways to improve Army morale in the early 1900's, Army commanders argued to Congress that bands stimulated the fighting spirit in their men. Congress authorized a school for Army bandleaders at Fort Jay (originally Fort Columbus), Governor's Island, New York. This school began operations in 1911. The school originated with the efforts of Dr. Frank Damrosch, director of the Institute of Musical Art of the City of New York and Arthur A. Clappe, a former graduate of the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall, England. Ten free wind instrumentalist scholarships were offered to the Secretary of War to train Army musicians to become bandleaders. Ten candidates were sent to Fort Jay to take the entrance examination for admission to the Institute of Musical Art. Five candidates were selected out of the original ten. In 1912, preliminary theoretical examinations were sent to all regiments in the Army to screen bandsmen for the Institute. Seventy-five bandsmen took this test, but 10 were selected for the final exam. Five were selected for entrance into the Institute. In June 1913, the first class graduated from the school. The course of instruction was modeled after courses for training bandleaders in Great Britain, France, and Germany. The curriculum included: musical form, applied acoustics, history of music, wind band instrumentation, military band arranging, ear training, conducting, and pedagogy. Dr. Frank Damrosch supervised the training. Training was accomplished at the Institute and at a branch established at Fort Jay. Mr. Arthur Clappe directed the training at Fort Jay. The instructors were selected from some of the most famous teachers in the United States. Percy Grainger taught oboe at the school.

A band of 25 recruit musicians were added to increase the musical experience and to prepare students to assume bandleader duties. The Recruit Practice Band was established in 1914. The recruits formed various groups and received individual instruction from the band leader students. Twice weekly, the groups assembled as a band affording each student the opportunity to assume as a bandleader. This training not only trained the future bandleaders, but it also trained young bandsmen to fill positions in bands.

WORLD WAR I

During WWI, the Army Music School maintained an extensive program. The War Department authorized the principal of the school to examine civilian applicants for bandleader positions. The Army needed to fill the many new positions due to the increasing number of regiments and bands. General John J. Pershing, Commander of the American forces in WWI was concerned about the poor musical quality of many of the bands and so he established a band school at Chaumont, France, in 1918. Its curriculum included an eight-week course for bandmasters and a twelve-week course for bandsmen. Walter Damrosch, conductor of the New York Symphony, designed the course of study. The eight week course covered the following areas: harmony, instrumentation, and conducting. The bandsmen studied performing on the oboe, bassoon, and French horn. Mr. Damrosch included these instruments because he noticed they were not included in many bands in the Army Expeditionary Forces.

Teachers selected for the school at Chaumont were from the Paris Conservatory of Music and ranked high in their profession. Some of the instructors included: Andre Caplet, Marcel Durivaux, Arthur Barboul, and

Charles Albert. Albert Stosesel taught conducting and his textbook, "The Technic of the Baton," was originally written for his classes at Chaumont. A band of forty-eight musicians was assigned to provide student bandleaders a vehicle to practice conducting and study instrumentation. The city of Chaumont became a musical center. There were regular chamber music recitals, the school band presented concerts, and the band performed daily at the guard mount ceremonies. The local population attended many of the performances. The time allowed for instruction was too short to qualify bandsmen or bandleaders in the courses studied. The school was discontinued shortly after the signing of the armistice on November 11, 1918.

THE ARMY MUSIC SCHOOL

After the war, Congress returned bands to peacetime status by abolishing bandmaster commissions. Bandmasters were allowed to enlist as bandleaders. Additional legislation in 1920 authorized warrant officer grades for bandmasters and reduced band strengths to 28 men in post bands and 36 men in regimental bands, although a 48-man band was retained for a time at the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia. The quality of bands dropped as Soldiers left the service.

In February 1920, the Army Music School at Fort Jay was designated a Special Services School of the Army. In September 1921 after reorganization, the school was moved to the Army War College, Washington DC. This ended the affiliation with the Institute of Musical Art which lasted 10 years and provided the Army with many outstanding leaders.

The following courses were offered: Bandleader-two years long. Preparatory Bandleader-one year long. Advanced Instrumentalist-one year long. Bandsmen-one year long. The total number of authorized students was 215.

The Army Music School was very successful. The number of qualified performers increased the performance level of bands. Though bands began to improve, budget restrictions forced the school to close in 1928 and from 1928 to 1941, bandsmen had no school.

WORLD WAR II

Due to the worsening conditions in Europe, the Army increased the number of Soldiers by establishing a selective draft. In order to meet the musical requirements of a large army, the War Department established an emergency Army Music School. In June 1941, the Department of the Army established a school for bandmasters at the Army War College. Soon after, the school was relocated to Fort Myer, Virginia, and operated as part of the Adjutant General Corps. The Army Music School was under the direct supervision of the Commander of the US Army Band. Captain Thomas F. Darcy first served in that position until 1945. The school trained bandleaders and was three months long. The classes were originally limited to 25 students. Enlisted personnel with the following qualification were selected: three years in a Regular Army Band, physically qualified, and possess the moral and general requirements necessary for appointment as a Warrant Officer, and not over 45 years of age. The classes expanded to 75 students after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The school with its short and intensive course trained many more bandleaders than the War Department ordered. The Army Music School closed on or about 1 January 1944 after an adequate number of bandleaders graduated to supply the needs of the Army.

Although the new school offered training for bandmasters, inferior performances continued. The absence of standards for selecting bandsmen and the fact no school existed for training bandsmen contributed to inferior performances.

The closing of the bandsman training facility at Camp Lee resulted in untrained musicians entering Army bands. By 1948, entire bands were untrained and performing poorly. Post commanders complained to the Department of the Army. After studying the problem, the Department of the Army recommended schools for bandsmen be reestablished. In 1951, the Department of the Army established a 20-week basic bandsman course at the United States Navy School of Music, and an 8-week basic course at band training units located at Fort Ord, Fort Knox, Fort Jackson, Fort Leonard Wood, and Fort Dix. These 8-week courses were later increased to 16 weeks.

MID 20TH CENTURY

In January 1956, the Department of the Army closed all band training units, and the Navy School of Music assumed responsibility for all bandsman advanced individual training. Later in that same year, a bandmaster preparatory course was added to the curriculum at the School of Music providing the formal training necessary as a prerequisite to appointment as an Army bandmaster.

On April 13, 1961, the Secretary of the Navy announced plans for the US Navy School of Music to be relocated to the Naval Amphibious Base at Little Creek, Norfolk, Virginia. On August 12, 1964, the doors to the Navy School of Music in Washington, D.C. were secured. The USS Cado Parish and the USS Monmouth County proceeded to the US Naval Amphibious Base loaded with musical instruments and Army and Navy personnel. Each ship had a band aboard to play honors as it passed George Washington's tomb in Mt. Vernon, Virginia. This was the first time an Army band performed honors on a Navy ship for our first president, George Washington. The ships landed at the Naval Amphibious Base on the morning of August 13, 1964. By joint service agreement, the facility was renamed the "School of Music" concurrent with the move. One of the highlights of the move of the School of Music was the dedication ceremony concert. Arthur Fiedler, conductor of the Boston Pops, guest conducted the School of Music Concert Band.

With the establishment of Enlisted Bandleader (E8) positions, a training program directed toward qualifying enlisted members for positions was programmed and implemented. This course became a prerequisite for the Warrant Officer Bandmaster Course of Instruction.

In 1970, a group leader course was established at the School of Music. This course trained group leaders with the leadership and musical skills at an intermediate level. It filled the gap between the basic and advanced courses offered at the School of Music. The first class enrolled in January 1971.

LATE 20TH AND EARLY 21ST CENTURIES

The advanced training courses for Army bandsmen underwent major revision in 1984. The Groupleader Course (F2) graduated its last class in November 1984. In December 1984, the last Enlisted Bandleader Course graduated from the School of Music and the course was discontinued.

In 1983, the School of Music ended its long relationship with the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) as a separate service school and was integrated into the Soldier Support Center. All advanced courses underwent major revisions and aligned with the Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES). NCOs were now able to obtain credit on their official military records for classes taken, something that was unavailable under the old system. The following courses were offered:

- (1) Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course (ANCOC). This course trained sergeants first

class and promotable staff sergeants. A common core, covering military training, was taught prior to arrival at the technical track at the School of Music. Training covered rehearsal techniques for ensemble and stage bands; band supply, administration, and operations procedures; and augmentation mission. The first ANCOC class began training at the School of Music in September 1984. Common Core was first taught at Ft. Ben Harrison, later moved to Ft. Eustis and finally established at the School of Music in 1996.

(2) Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course (BNCOC). This course trained staff sergeants and promotable sergeants. These bandmembers received training in section rehearsal techniques and drum majoring. They also received augmentation mission training as squad leaders/team leaders. The first BNCOC class was enrolled in June 1985.

In 2004, the School of Music established a four week Basic Music Course for Reserve Component Soldiers to replace the old method of having them perform OJT with a band.

In 2005, in recognition of the expanding role of Army-specific training, the U.S. Army Element, School of Music was redesignated as the U.S. Army School of Music. The Host-Tenant relationship with the Navy School of Music remained unchanged.